

nos adducere lucem by richiewheeler (orphan_account)

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Summary:

What happens when the headlights dim, the shadow leaves, and the gate closes.

nos adducere lucem

Author's Note:

I am not 100% sure what this is, all I know is I have too many ideas. I really want this to be the start of snapshots of El's time away from Hawkins but still with their group.

Please send me any requests for ideas you want to see @eleventhemage on tumblr or on here!

Mike Wheeler looks at his friends as the lights finally dim. He walks closer to the hole they just escaped from, and peeks into the darkness. No otherworldly sounds.

“Holy shit,” Dustin says as Steve’s hand grabs at Mike’s elbow, steadying him.

“She did it,” Mike says with a smile, stepping away from the hole. Then, a dark thought clutched at his chest. Did she sacrifice herself? Again? Is El gone? Was this *E.T.*?

Mike’s knees buckle from the force of the pressure on his chest. Before he smacks into the dirt, Steve catches him.

“Woah, buddy,” Steve gently sets him on the ground. Faintly, he can hear Dustin, Lucas and Max talking but it’s just white noise. “Did something get you? Are you hurt?”

All he can hear is Steve, but all he can see is El.

Staring down the Demogorgon in their classroom, her lips saying “goodbye.” He sees her walking through the Byers’ door, tears in her eyes as they finally reunite. He barely lasted a year without her, and he knows he won’t be able to do it again. He’s on the porch, watching her drive away, watching her *leave* him.

He never should have let her go, god damn it he’s such an *idiot* -

Something slaps against his cheek, and the image of her shatters.

“Get it together!” Lucas shouts at him, right in his face. Lucas is shaking him by the shoulders. “Are you bleeding? Are you hurt? *Are you okay?*”

“Where’s El?” He looks around, everything coming into focus. They’re in the pumpkin patch. He’s on the ground. His party is all surrounding him. His cheek hurts.

“She’s probably with Hopper,” Dustin says, looking at him like he belongs in Pennhurst.

“Is she okay?” He demands, trying to stand but they push him down, they’re keeping him *away* from her.

“Don’t panic,” Steve says as they all start to talk over each other. All he wants is to get to El and his party is *stopping him*- “Jesus, fuck, okay. Okay! *Shut up!*”

Miraculously, they all quiet. Mike swallows down his anxiety.

“We’ll go to the Lab, we’ll get you right there,” Steve says, then turns to Max. “Gimme the keys.”

“You can’t see out that shiner of yours,” She says instead of listening. Mike rubs at his cheek, glaring at Lucas, who shrugs.

“And you can’t reach the gas pedal, squirt,” The mulleted-boy says. “Let’s get Wheeler back to his girlfriend.” Max gives him the keys, but not without bickering that Mike drowns out.

Mike lets Dustin and Lucas haul him up. His knees are shaky, but he’d run across the galaxy to find El and bring her back, so he moves on his own accord quickly.

They all pile back into the car. In the front, Steve drives while Max bickers and gives directions in shotgun, with Lucas backseat driving behind her. Dustin sits in the middle, practically vibrating with energy. Mike rests his head against the window, looking out at the skyline. His head hurts, but he tries to send a message out to El, if that’s even possible.

I’m coming for you, El.

He thinks of how she looked fighting the Demogorgon, and how she looked after fighting the Bad Men, how she was so tired. Even if she's alive, she's probably really hurt.

Gently, he kicks at Steve's seat.

"What, Wheels?"

"Floor it."

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In Hopper's arms, El can't stop thinking of Papa. Not as he held her in the school and said he was going to make her well again, or when he made her hurt the cats. But when she opened the gate a 360 days ago, trapped in the bath. All she wanted was a hug, to get pulled from the water. But no one held her, they left her there as the walls tore apart. She was stuck, for what felt like hours. They dragged her to the punishment room, leaving her only her wet outfit and a gown to change into. When they opened the doors, she killed. And she fled.

She didn't flee this time. And this time she had someone to hold her, to tell her she fixed it. She almost wants to be there forever.

"Gone?" She asks him as everything gets quiet, when it finally feels over. "It's gone? The gate is closed?"

"You did it," He tells her. He pulls back. Just when she wants to hug him again, he keeps the distance and wipes his thumbs under her nose. "You did so good."

"Can we go home?" She asks with heavy eyes. She feels sore and empty. But also happy, but a tired happy.

"Yeah, I got you, come on," He lifts her to her feet, but she sways, so he catches her and holds her until she's steady. "Can you hop on my back?" He says, still resting his big hands on her shoulders.

"Hop on Hop," She says absently. He chuckles a little and kneels down, facing away from her. More out of instinct than physical power, she jumps on his back.

On the days he'd let her roam the woods with him, she'd cling to his back. It'd be dark, but he'd have his flashlight and show her different kinds of trees and rocks like they were learning in her science book. It became one of her favorite ways to travel.

The other is Mike's bike.

She feels a jolt. *Mike.*

"Mike," She says, tugging on Hopper's ear to get his attention. "We have to find Mike."

"We will," Hopper says, messing with the buttons on the controller. "We just have to figure out how to get the hell out of here."

El wants to help him, she does, but her brain feels so sleepy, so she closes her eyes.

She wakes up on the first floor of Hawkins Lab, eyes lazily blinking open. Hopper still carries her. Why isn't she home yet? She actually misses the tiny cabin.

"Shit," Hopper says to himself. "I should call backup for Owens."

"The scientist?" A flash of the man she saw, bleeding on the floor, then it quickly changes into her and Kali in that bad man's apartment, with a gun to his head. But she's too tired to dwell and the image doesn't stay. "Is he a Bad Man?"

Hopper makes a noise, and it almost sounds like "I don't know" but much too quickly.

"We'll call back up after we get you out of here," He decides, then stops in his tracks. "*Shit.*"

"What-?"

"Headlights," Hopper says, looking out past the windows at the nearing lights. "A car is coming."

He moves them out of the way of the windows, shielding her with his entire body, but then El feels what can only be described as a

vibration in her mind.

El, I'm almost there, please be okay.

"It's Mike," El says, a smile spreading on her face. She tugs at Hopper's hat again. "He's here."

"You sure?"

"Yes." She's never been more sure of anything. After 352 days of connecting to him and finding him and hearing him, she could feel him anywhere.

"Let's stay over here," Hopper makes no move to move. "Just to be."

"EL! ELEVEN! ARE YOU HERE?" A muffled scream reaches them, and it's Mike, she knows his voice anywhere. She can also hear Dustin and Lucas shouting, a loud thunderstorm of friendship.

El smiles against Hopper's back. Her friends are here. They're safe. They came for her.

"We got company," He says with a sigh, and moves them to the door.

"Down, set me down," El says. She still feels fuzzy, but she wants to stand.

"You got it, kid," He puts her down. He makes sure she's okay then goes to open the door.

El takes the bandana off her wrist to wipe at her ears, and tries to make sure there's no blood. Then, she waits to see Mike out of that head of hers, with no monster waiting to tear them down.

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Mike runs to Hawkins Lab, several feelings of fear, adrenaline, and just *love* clutching at his chest. Dustin, Lucas and Max are behind him, with Steve badly parking the car on the sidewalk from the sound of the car crashing into things.

He nearly smacks into the glass doors, immediately pounding on

them afterwards. “El!” He shouts even though he’s out of breath. “El! Are you okay-?”

The door opens, and Hopper stands like a dragon guarding the princess, his tall frame leaning against the doorway to block him from coming in. “I thought you were supposed to stay at Joyce’s. What the hell were you-?”

“Change of plans,” Dustin says, panting as he skids to a stop.

“Let us in, is she okay-”

“Mike.” He hears her say from behind Hopper. She’s alive, thank *God* she’s alive. He tries to shove past Hopper, but the big guy and his tree arms stop him. Out of breath, Mike coughs and deflates.

“We’re not staying here,” Hopper says, and they all nod. He lets them through. “We’re leaving in ten seconds- Harrington? What the hell happened to your face?”

But Mike doesn’t care, he runs into that room and sees El, standing there off to the side, covered in smeared blood and looking woozy. And she’s there, she’s back and she’s *alive*.

He goes to her and wraps her in a hug. Immediately after he pulls away and asks, “Shit, are you hurt? Do you need-”

Mike doesn’t get the word out, because El grabs him and holds him tight. He lets them both melt, and he feels tears in his eyes.

“You did it,” He whispers into her hair because his voice would break if he said it normally. Plus, this moment is just for them. “You saved us. You came back.”

“I promised,” She says, her hand bunching a grip into his jacket. It’s grounding. Oh God, how he missed her.

“Okay, kids, time’s up,” Hopper taps on his shoulder. El pulls away and it feels like she’s being ripped from him again.

But he keeps his eyes on her, and it doesn’t hurt so bad.

"We need to make sure Will's okay," Hopper says, rubbing at his shoulder. "We know that damn Shadow-whatever monster is gone. But

A knot forms in Mike's stomach. He had heard the transmission of Jonathan telling them to go for it. But he's been so distracted with El... He looks at her, and she smiles at him as Dustin and Lucas run to her.

Mike sighs to himself. He needs to know for himself that Will's okay.

"Can I ride with you guys?" He asks, definitely not wanting to be too far.

Hopper eyes him as Dustin and Lucas hug El again. "Sure, Wheeler. Come on."

"I'll drive the rest of these little shits," Steve says warmly, stumbling slightly. "Byers House?"

Hopper nods once sharply as Mike wraps an arm around El's waist, helping her walk out. "Byers House." He turns to Mike, Dustin, Lucas and Max. "Keeps your little radios on. If any trouble comes, let us know."

Mike asks Dustin, "Channel 11?"

"Damn right," Dustin says then does his weird purr-growling at El. She just cocks her head and Lucas laughs, a little hysterical as he walks back to the car with Max.

They all nod and split up.

But they're still together.

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In the car, asleep and safe, El dreams. She thinks of Mike's basement, of the fort he built for her.

Instead of reaching out to him through her mind, she lets her mind drift to him on its own. She pictures the hug on top of the cliff, she

pictures the hug they just had in Joyce's house. She remembers the kiss they shared at the school, right before she disappeared.

For 352 days, she pictured seeing Mike again. She saw him in the Void and reached out to touch him, to be with him, and to hear his voice where it didn't echo, and for him to see her as well.

Seeing him at Joyce's house was everything to her.

I never gave up on you.

She knew. She felt it. But it was so good to hear right in her face, where he saw her too. It was real.

After watching a lot of what Hopper called "soaps," El saw lots of reunions. Lots were in hospitals, and many featured people getting slapped. She didn't want to slap Mike, so she didn't like those as much.

But then she remembered the movie she and Hopper watched once many days ago, because she wanted to see a love story. So he showed her an old movie in black and white, that she didn't remember the name of, because he was sick of watching the soaps with her. He was afraid of "lugging a VCS player" all the way in the woods, so they had to wait for it to play on a channel.

She remembers feeling the emotion of people she didn't know, even not eating as the couple reunited again. She watched as they hugged, as they cried, as they kissed.

"Will I see Mike again?" She asked when the movie was over and the names were on the screen. With her powers, she clicked it off. It wasn't the first time she asked, but she was always afraid the answer will change.

Hopper said nothing for almost 20 seconds, but he said, "You will. I'll make sure of it."

"Will it be like that?" She pointed at the screen.

Hopper's mouth opened, then closed. "That's up to you," He says slowly. "But maybe just start with a hearty hug."

“A hearty hug,” She repeated the phrase. “Why?”

“You don’t know where the Wheeler boy has been-”

“Yes I do.”

Hopper stopped again, and he looked at her. It wasn’t like the looks in the lab, like they were scared of her or were about to hurt her. It was soft.

“Yes you do,” Hopper agreed. “But trust me, okay, kid? A hug is always better than a kiss.”

Asleep, she smiles from the memory. She really did like hugging Mike.

But she still wants a kiss.

Author's Note:

thanks for reading!